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ABSTRACT

The second in a series on parenting education for American Indians, the booklet offers information on health and hygiene for the mother-to-be and the newborn baby. Chapters include care during pregnancy, mother's weight, mother's health, feeding newborns, washing the baby, baby's early diet, and baby's health care. (ERB)

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Health and Hygiene

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So You're Having a Baby

Whether this is your first baby or not, it is a good idea for you to go to a doctor or clinic. Medical care should start early in the pregnancy. This helps insure better health for you and your baby.

Take special care of yourself during pregnancy. Your baby's health depends on yours. A good balanced diet will help build your own strength as well as your baby's. If it is possible, each day you should eat the following:

—**Milk Group**: Four servings a day.
Example: One quart of skim milk or buttermilk or whole or evaporated milk

—**Meat Group**: Two or more 6-ounce servings a day

—**Fruit and Vegetables**: Four or more one-cup servings a day

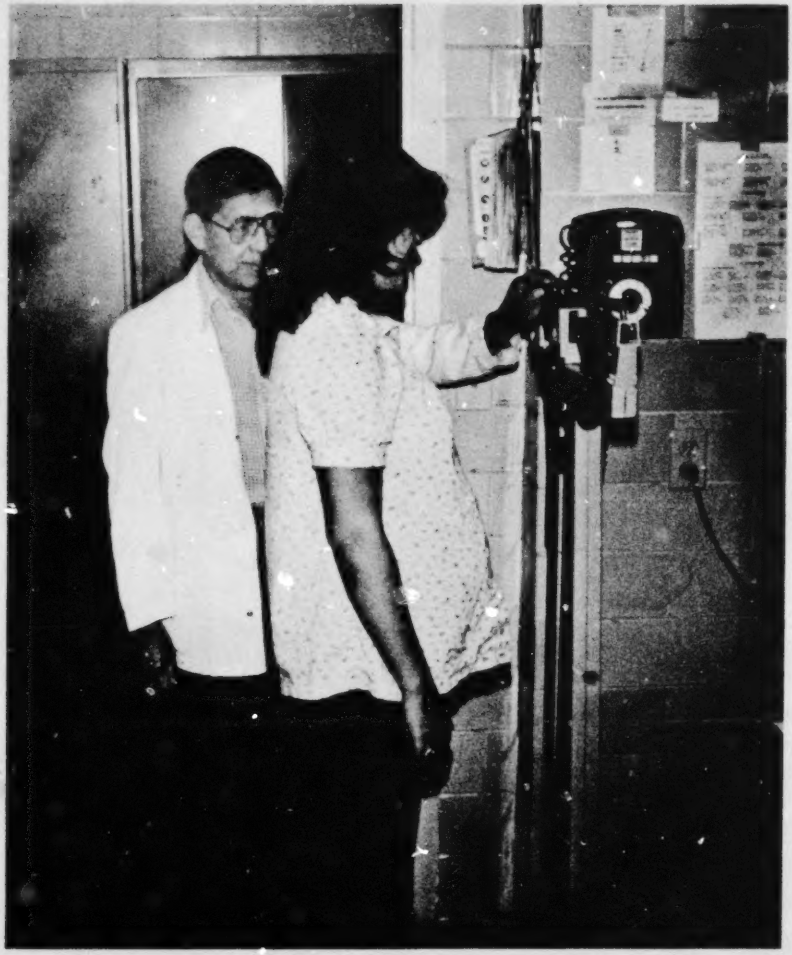
—**Fruit and Vegetables**: Four or more one-cup servings per day
Example: oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, fruit juices, broccoli, carrots, green beans, corn, spinach

—**Bread and Cereals**: Four or more one-cup servings per day
Example: grits, cereal, macaroni, rice, spaghetti, bread

Some doctors will tell you to cut down on salt, or if you gain weight too fast, on sweets. It is best to cut out all alcoholic beverages and smoking. Alcohol especially has bad effects on your baby. It can cause brain damage or poor nutrition or other health deficiencies.

Mother's Weight

Your average weight gain should be 20-25 pounds. Most of this comes after the first three months. Here is a chart you can use to see if you are gaining too much or too little. The curve is average. Take your weight every two weeks and write in what you have gained. Chart your own curve, and see if you fall close to the average.



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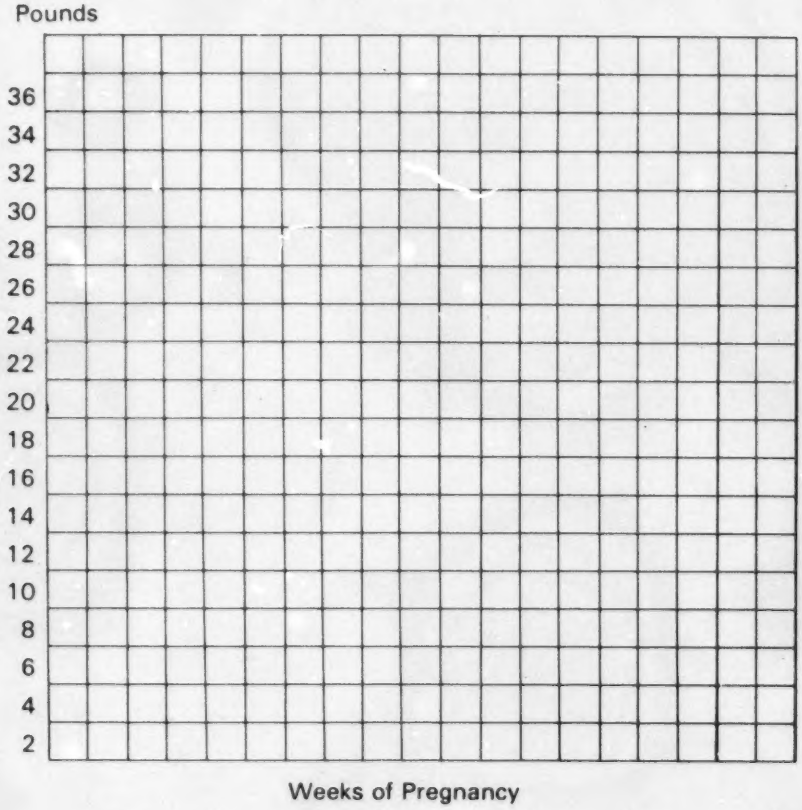
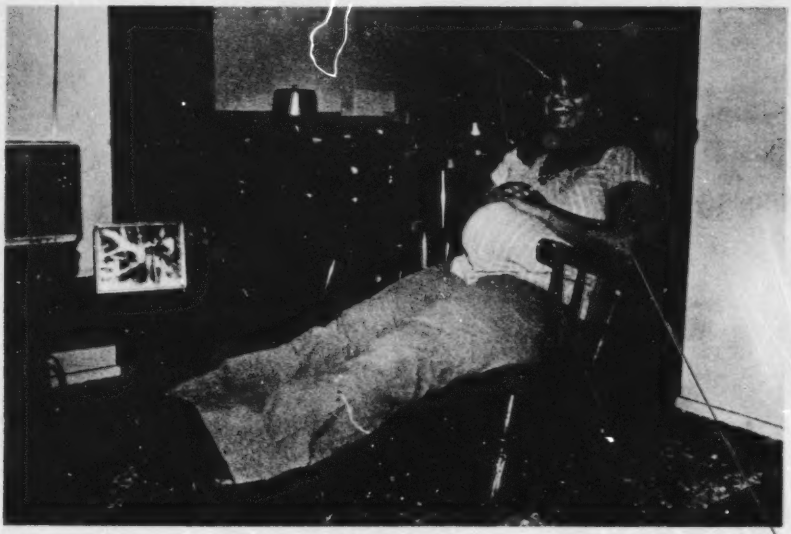


Normal Weight Gain Curve During Pregnancy

Mother's Health

When you are pregnant you may tire more easily. Sleep at least 8 hours a day, or more if you need more to feel rested. Try to take brief rest periods during the day. Sit down and put your feet up several times a day. Walking is healthy for you, but don't overdo it. Especially if it's hot. Try not to lift heavy objects or climb ladders or chairs.



Dress comfortably. Especially shoes. Avoid high heels and girdles. Regular baths are good, but do not douche. You may need a cream for your nipples. Often your breasts will secrete milk during pregnancy, which forms a thin crust on the nipples. Wash your breasts often with warm water. It is OK to have sex during normal pregnancies.

If any questions arise, feel free to ask your doctor. You may think something is not important when it is. Or you may think something is worse than it really is. Many pregnant women have problems with backaches, swelling feet, constipation, morning sickness (nausea), urinating a lot, tiredness, or strange cravings. It is OK to ask your doctor anything at all about these or any other concerns. If you have trouble sleeping, be sure to ask your doctor before you take any sleeping pills, or any other drugs for that matter.

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Feeding Newborns

Breast feeding is good for your baby. It is easier on the baby's stomach, and has more antibodies in it to fight disease. But sometimes it is hard to breast feed your baby. You may have to work. Or you may not have enough milk. Or the baby may need a vitamin supplement. It is best to get your doctor's advice on this. If you decide to bottle feed,extra care should be taken to avoid germs. Bottles should be boiled, and milk should be heated to body temperature.

If the baby is on the bottle, encourage your husband to feed the baby as much as possible. These first few weeks are very important, and this is when "parent-child bonding" occurs. You want your baby to feel a strong bond with the father, and the father to feel a strong bond with the baby, and this is a good way to help that take place. This is healthy for the baby and the father.

Ways to avoid colic or tummy aches is to replace bottle nipples often, avoid propping the bottle up in the crib, and as much as possible, hold the baby while feeding. This way the baby doesn't swallow as much air and will not choke as easily.

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Washing the Baby

The first few weeks you should only sponge bathe your baby each time you change the diaper. Use warm water and mild soap. Oils and lotions are not necessary. After the baby's umbilical cord falls off, you can give your baby tub baths. Evening baths are nice, especially when both mother and father take part in bathing the baby.

Be sure the room is warm when lyou bathe your baby. Check the water temperature with your elbow to make sure it's not too hot or too cold. Do not use cotton-tips to clean the baby's ears, eyes or nose. They puncture too easily, and cause too many accidents and infections. And above all—
Never leave the baby alone in the water for any reason whatsoever!

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Baby's Early Diet

Mother's milk is usually best for your baby. But formula can be just as good. Babies need iron. You may want to use a formula formulated with iron to substitute breast milk. Check with your doctor on this.

Very soon your baby will need more than milk. Fruit juices are good too, because babies need the vitamin C. When the baby is 3-4 weeks old, you can begin giving some fruit juice. A one or two-month baby can drink the following in one day:

—24-30 ounces of formula, breast milk or combination

—2-4 tablespoons of baby apple juice

—2-3 tablespoons of dry baby cerial with their milk

From two to six months you can begin to introduce more foods to the baby. Baby foods are best, but you can strain the vegetables and fruits you prepare for yourself too. After six months your baby can begin to eat food from your own plate, such as small pieces of chicken meat, mashed potatoes, bread and butter, or fruits and vegetables. Above all, avoid giving your baby junk foods. Potato chips are not good for babies. Soda pop and kool-aid have too much sugar for babies, and no nutrition. Avoid candies and sweets too. Good eating habits begin in infancy, and you don't want your baby to develop a sweet tooth! That causes overweight, bad teeth and gums, and sometimes high blood pressure and other more serious problems! Jello or applesauce are good deserts for toddlers. Even older children can snack on cereals, raisins, fruit, cheese and crackers, or peanut butter and fruit juices. Candy can be given as a special treat, but is not good regularly. Peanut butter or oatmeal cookies are good sweets, but not too many!

Baby's Health Care

Most childhood diseases can be avoided. The law requires all children to get shots. Some shots should begin at age two months. Set s schedule of shots with your doctor as soon as the baby is born, and *keep to it!* Here is a list of the required shots:

Age	Diptheria Pertussis (whooping cough) Tetanus (lockjaw)	Polio (polio-myelitis)	Measles (red or hard measles)	Rubella (German or 3-day measles)	Mumps
2 months	X	X			
4 months	X	X			
6 months	X	(optional)			
15 months		X	X	X	X
18 months	X	X			
4-6 years	X				
14-16 years and every 10 years after that	X				

All these shots can be given at Indian Health Service hospitals and clinics.

It is never enough just to get all the shots, to feed our children right, wash them well, and keep them warm. Every child also needs love and security. We love our children very much, but sometimes we can't afford special baby foods or diaper service or private pediatricians. There are other ways that we can assure that the basic health and hygiene needs of our children are met.

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As our children grow older, they have additional helath and hygiene problems. By the time they enter school, they may need to have your help in learning how to care for their own hair. Toilet training, which usually takes place from 18-36 months of age, is when many infants begin to develop personal hygiene habits. Young girls, by the age of 10, should begin to understand what to expect with their periods, and how to keep clean and comfortable.

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It is also important to know that a lot of good health depends on good teeth. We need to teach our children to brush their teeth when they first get their baby teeth and to start seeing a dentist at an early age. Too many parents wait until they get their permanent teeth. By that time the child has not developed the habit of brushing, and it is hard to develop one. Also, gums and teeth may have already been damaged by years of neglect. Start your toddler brushing after every meal, with a soft baby's tooth brush, by the time the first full set of teeth is in.

Remember that children learn by their parents' examples. We must practice clean habits as adults. Being clean is the best prevention of disease. Cleanliness is considered a preventive method of illness.

But your children's health and happiness depends on many other factors. It depends on how well we are able to communicate with our children. It depends on how consistent we are in rewarding or reaching our children. Our ability to judge our children's needs from their behavior. Our willingness to listen, to study and to show concern for our child's well-being. It means giving enough time and attention to our children. And it means not losing our patience. Other booklets in this series will discuss some of these areas more in depth.

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